

# Surveys in Spanish Real Estate: What They Are & Why They Matter

When buying property in Spain, surveys are not legally mandatory in most cases. Unlike some countries, there is no requirement for a full structural survey.

However, “not mandatory” does **not** mean “not important.” Surveys and technical reports are **key tools for risk management**, especially for older, rural, or renovated properties.

Understanding the types of surveys, who prepares them, and when they are relevant can save buyers from costly surprises.

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## Types of Surveys You Can Expect

In Spain, surveys generally fall into three categories:

1. **Technical or Structural Survey**
2. **Planning & Legal Conformity Checks**
3. **Energy Performance Certification (EPC / Certificado Energético)**

Each serves a distinct purpose and carries a different level of legal and practical weight.

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### 1. Technical / Structural Survey

#### **Purpose:**

A detailed inspection of the physical condition of the property.

#### **Prepared by:**

A qualified architect (**arquitecto**) or technical architect (**arquitecto técnico**).

#### **What it covers:**

- Structural condition (walls, beams, foundations)
- Roofs, terraces, balconies
- Damp, cracks, subsidence, or other visible defects
- Plumbing, electrics, and installations (visual inspection)
- Estimated repair or maintenance costs

#### **When it's most relevant:**

- Older properties
- Villas or rural homes
- Properties intended for renovation
- Properties showing visible defects

**Key point:**

This survey is optional but **strongly recommended**. Defects discovered after purchase are usually the buyer's responsibility.

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## 2. Planning & Conformity Surveys

**Purpose:**

Confirms that the property is **legally compliant**.

**Also called:**

- Certificate of Conformity
- Urban Planning Report

**Prepared by:**

Architects or engineers, sometimes submitted to the Town Hall.

**What it checks:**

- Property matches **planning permissions**
- Aligns with **Cadastre and Land Registry records**
- Can obtain a **Licencia de Primera Ocupación (LPO)** or **AFO** status

**When it matters:**

- Properties without an LPO
- Rural properties or land plots
- Extensions, alterations, or renovations
- Mortgage or resale planning

**Key point:**

This survey focuses on **legal risk**, not physical condition.

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## 3. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC / Certificado Energético)

**Purpose:**

Measures the property's energy efficiency.

**Required by law:**

- Mandatory for **selling or renting** property in Spain.

**What it assesses:**

- Energy efficiency rating (**A–G**)
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Insulation, windows, heating and cooling systems

**Who issues it:**

A **certified technician** registered with the regional authority.

**Why it matters:**

- Required before marketing the property
- Impacts ongoing **running costs**
- Increasingly relevant for **future regulations and renovations**

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## How Surveys Fit Into the Buying Process

- Surveys are typically conducted **after the reserva** (reservation agreement).
- They are used to **verify legal compliance** and **identify physical issues** before signing a private purchase contract.
- New-build properties usually include a **10-year structural guarantee**, while older homes do not.
- Technical certificates for **water and electricity (boletines / potencia)** may also be required.
- Seasonal considerations: Buying in summer may hide winter-related problems (e.g., damp or heating issues) and vice versa.
- Future planning: Check for expansion possibilities (extensions, pool legality, community restrictions).
- Cross-check survey findings with the **Nota Simple** and **Escritura** to confirm what was actually built.

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## Summary & Key Takeaways

- Surveys are **not legally mandatory** in Spain, but strongly advised, particularly for older, rural, or renovation properties.

- Use a combination of **technical/structural surveys, planning/conformity checks, and energy certificates** to reduce risk.
- Always work with **qualified professionals**: architects, technical architects, or certified energy assessors.
- Check **seasonal issues** and verify documentation against official records.
- Ensure any new-build property has the **LPO** and 10-year structural insurance.

Properly conducted surveys **protect your investment**, reduce unforeseen costs, and provide peace of mind when buying property in Spain.

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